

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION NEWSLETTER

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[HTTP://OFP.SCC.WA.GOV/](http://ofp.scc.wa.gov/)

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Washington State Legislature Wraps Up 2013/14 work

The Washington State legislature recently adjourned their 60 day session. Overall, it was a pretty quiet session for agriculture in general. When the gavel fell on this years session hundreds of measures introduced during the 2013/14 legislative biennium were not passed. Some funding notes and bills of interest that passed or did not pass are included below.



[SHB 2454](#) - Developing a water quality trading program in WA - PASSED - governor signed.

Brief summary as passed: Directs the State Conservation Commission, in partnership with the Department of Ecology, to further explore where the concept of regulatory compliance through water quality trading.

Connection to farmland preservation: A market placed approach provides potential of land management to improve water quality and improve environmental benefits in a cost-effective way. . These markets may provide a diversified revenue source for farmers and ranchers.

[E2SHB 2493](#) - Current use valuation - commercial horticultural. PASSED - governor signed.

Brief Summary as passed: Concerning current use valuation for land primarily used for commercial horticultural purposes. Defines farm and agricultural lands eligible for current use tax classification to include certain commercial horticultural lands used to grow plants in containers.

Connection to farmland preservation: This is a focused bill so that only nurseries that are truly growing plants like other agricultural crops will be allowed under the current use tax classification. A healthy nursery industry contributes to our overall agricultural economy and serves a need in the agricultural community and contributes to the states ag infrastructure.

[SSB 5123](#) - Establishing a farm internship program - PASSED - Needs governor signature

Brief summary as passed: Creates a farm internship pilot project similar to the 2010-2011 pilot project, and allows participation by small farms in Chelan, Grant, Island, Jefferson, King, Kitsap, Kittitas, Lincoln, Pierce, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Spokane, Thurston, Whatcom, and Yakima counties.

Connection to farmland preservation: Farm internships can provide important training for the next generation of farmer in our state. The bill would create a program to encourage young people to get into farming by creating an educational opportunity through an internship, which is different than employment. This also clarifies the role of interns on a farm.

[2014 Supplemental Operating Budget](#) - PASSED - Needs governor signature

The operating budget included \$200,000 for the Farmers Market Nutrition Programs; \$111,000 for the Small Farm Internship Program; and \$800,000 for the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP), the state program that funds food banks.

[ESHB 2306](#) - Concerning current use valuation for farm and agricultural land - DID NOT PASS

Brief summary: As passed by the House , this bill directed Department of Revenue to conduct a study to evaluate and make recommendations on improving the current for farm and agricultural lands, with an emphasis on the viability of small farms.

Connection to farmland preservation: The Open Space Taxation act has been a tool to preserve viable agricultural land in Washington for over 40 years. Small farms can be found in near urban areas where the highest and best use may be developed home sites. Identifying ways to keep these small farms viable is a strategy to preserve farmland and grow our state's agricultural economy.

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Regional TDR Update from Central Puget Sound

From the 2014 March Growth Management Services Planner's Update - [Available here](#)

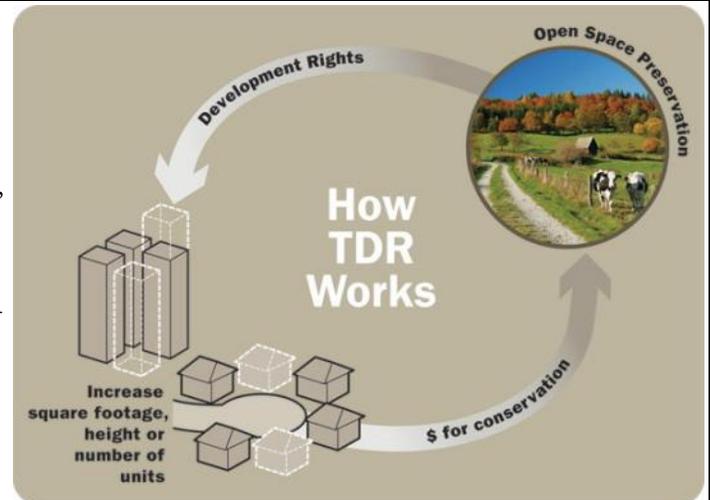
Counties and cities have been working together on Puget Sound conservation goals through the regional transfer of development rights (TDR) since 2001. Under a Seattle agreement, 68 TDR credits were transferred from King County and used in projects in South Lake Union.

By 2013, nine cities had adopted programs and interlocal agreements with the counties to receive development rights from agricultural and forest lands – Normandy Park, Tacoma, Mountlake Terrace, Snohomish, Arlington, Bellevue, Issaquah, Sammamish, and Seattle.

Development in these cities, small and large, provides the market for conserving forest and agricultural throughout rural Puget Sound.

TDR has also been instrumental in conserving farm land in Pierce and King Counties. Pierce County's acquisition of the development rights from Reise Farm reduced the development value of the property, allowing Puget Consumers Co-op Farmland Trust to buy the farm at an affordable price. The Reise Farm is a 120 acre working farm that contains habitat values, with forested wetlands and the headwaters of Ball Creek that drains into the main stem of the Puyallup River.

For more information about regional TDR in central Puget Sound, go to www.commerce.wa.gov/tdr. You will find a quick tutorial on How TDR Works, read a report on Regional TDR in Central Puget Sound, see what TDR policies and regulations have been adopted by counties and cities, and find a number of other resources for developing a TDR program.



Ag and Water quality advisory committee convenes

The Washington Department of Ecology recently created a new agriculture and water quality advisory committee to expand upon and improve working relationships with agricultural landowners and livestock producers. The advisory committee held its inaugural meeting on March 19th in Lacey WA.

Meeting and schedule information including agendas and presentations is available by going to:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/nonpoint/Agriculture/AgWQACmtg.html>

To learn more about who is participating, and committee activity go to:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/wq/nonpoint/Agriculture/AgWQAC.html> Livestock Nose pump and exclusion fencing - Tenino WA



Joint senate meeting to discuss Shorelines Act and land use



A joint work session of the Senate Governmental Operations and Senate Energy, Environment, and Telecommunications is scheduled for April 17 at 7pm in the Sumner High School Performing Arts Center ([1707 Main St, Sumner WA](http://www.sumner.wa.gov)). Parking is located on the west side of campus.

The work session will discuss the Shoreline Management Act and its land use implications. The public is invited to attend and provide public feedback and comments.

The Shorelines Management Act was passed in 1971. The overarching goals of the Act is "to prevent the inherent harm in an uncoordinated and piecemeal development of the state's shorelines."

Background on the Act can be viewed at: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sma/st_guide/intro.html

Farm bill and budget news

The National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition recently asked the question “What does the President’s 2015 budget mean for sustainable agriculture?” You can see how they answered as well as learn more about some of the recent changes to the farm bill. NSAC also provides an [annual appropriations tracking chart](#) (PDF) which is updated with the President’s request.

[What Does the President’s 2015 Budget Mean for Sustainable Agriculture?](#) (NSAC blog post)

FSA recently released their official 2014 Farm Bill Fact Sheet. The Agricultural Act of 2014 (the Act), also known as the 2014 Farm Bill, was signed by President Obama on Feb. 7, 2014. The Act repeals certain programs, continues some programs with modifications, and authorizes several new programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Most of these programs are authorized and funded through 2018.

The fact sheet outlining modifications to Farm Service Agency Farm Loan Programs is available [here](#).

Leadership program seeking applicants for 18-month fellowships

The Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation is actively seeking qualified candidates for up to 24 fellowships in Class 37 of its leadership program, David Roseleip, president, said. People involved in the agriculture, forestry, fisheries or related industries are encouraged to apply.

The deadline for applications is April 30.

The Washington Agriculture and Forestry Education Foundation covers the majority of the costs of the program, while participants pay a participation fee, which includes a membership in the Foundation.

Interested candidates should review the Foundation’s website at www.agforestry.org. They may also contact the office by phone at (509) 926-9113, fax (509)926-6993 or request an application by email from melisa@agforestry.org.



Washington Snowpack to near normal levels

February saw two to three times normal snowfall, putting Washington State snowpack at near normal levels according to data from USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service in its third 2014 forecast.

Well above average precipitation along with cooler than normal temperatures brought much needed relief to both the mountain snowpack and soil moisture in the valleys. Forecasts for spring and summer runoff have increased dramatically over last month as well. View the March Snow Survey and Water Supply Forecast [map](#).

Other resources on drought include the [U.S. Drought Monitor](#). For information on USDA’s drought efforts, visit [USDA Disaster and Drought Information](#). [WA Ecology Washington Water Supply Information](#). Includes a collection of links to web pages with current and monthly information.

Economic Impacts of Local Food in Iowa

Last fall, the Iowa Regional Food System’s working group released the findings of a report commissioned to analyze the statewide impact of the local food industry on Iowa’s economy in connection with efforts of the Regional Food Systems Working Group (RFSWG).

Evaluation was conducted in 2013 in partnership with coordinators of the 15 regional food groups that comprise the statewide RFSWG. Documented impacts described in the report are the result of collaboration between these coordinators and local food farmers and buyers. **Check out the results here!** <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/local-food>

In Short

U.S. organic industry grows in 2013

USDA recently announced that the organic industry continues to grow. Through the National Organic Program, USDA helped 763 producers become certified organic in 2013, for a total of 18,513 certified organic farms and businesses in the United States. Certified organic operations appear in Washington numbered 1,096. View the list of Certified USDA Organic Operations maintained by the National Organic Program [here](#).

FSA Fact sheet on Farm Bill

Check out FSAs fact sheet on the Farm Bill signed by President Obama on Feb. 7, 2014. The Act repeals certain programs, continues some programs with modifications, and authorizes several new programs administered by the Farm Service Agency (FSA). Most of these programs are authorized and funded through 2018.

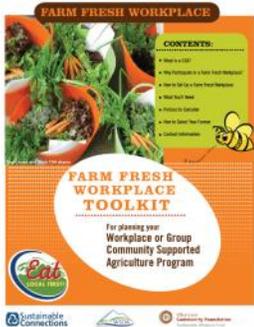
[Click here for a PDF version \(316KB\) of the fact sheet.](#)

Biennial SARE report features Whatcom County Project

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) provides grant funding to cutting-edge farmers, ranchers, researchers, and educators for projects that aim to improve the sustainability of American agriculture. Check out the 2013/14 edition of SARE's biennial report (including a report on a Whatcom County farm-to-school program).

The 20-page report is available free online or in print by clicking [here](#).

Sustainable Connections CSA Workplace Toolkit



Sustainable Connections recently published an online toolkit for local employers who want start a workplace Community Supported Agriculture delivery, or CSA.

A CSA is a partnership with a local farm, where the customer pays upfront at the beginning of the season, and in return receives a weekly box of farm fresh produce and more.

Directly download the toolkit, at sustainableconnections.org.

The guide includes details on how to organize a Workplace CSA, policies to consider, how to select a farmer and why a CSA champion might be beneficial.

On-farm research expands farmer options in reducing nitrates

Results from a five-year on-farm research project are helping a northwest Iowa farmer keep valuable land in production as well as reduce nitrogen runoff into shallow wells that supply water for a nearby community of 7,000 people. The project also shows how research can be used to expand farmer options outlined in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy.

See more at: <http://www.leopold.iastate.edu/news/03-26-2014/farmer-options-reducing-nitrates>

Handbook: Urban Farm Planning

As with all types of businesses, an urban farm requires planning. And if the farm is located in a repurposed building or on an abandoned lot, it could present even more challenges than a traditional farm. To help guide you through the process of planning, the Partnership for Sustainable Communities, through EPA's Office of Brownfields and Land Revitalization, produced two useful resources—the Urban Farm Business Plan Handbook, and its complementary Urban Farm Business Plan Worksheets. The handbook, along with its worksheets, is available to download at www.epa.gov/brownfields/urbanag/pdf/urban_farm_business_plan.pdf.

Job Opportunities

Pike Place Market - Farm Development Coordinator, Seattle

The Pike Place Market Farm Program is adding a new staff position, a Farm Development Coordinator. The position is full time and comes with benefits.

Questions, contact Zack Cook, Farm Program Manager at 206.774.5291

Check out the description below

[Farm Development Coordinator](#) (PDF)

Slow Money NW Position - Eastern WA Value Chain Advisor Contract

Slow Money Northwest is managing a two phase Farm to School project between Washington State food producers and the Eastern WA school districts involved in a regional school-based scratch-cooking program. SMNW is seeking a part-time contractor in Eastern Washington to help local school districts form contracts with WA State food producers.

[Detailed position announcement](#) (PDF)

Viva Farms seeks Farm Manager

Viva Farms seeks an organized, knowledgeable, passionate, and self-motivated farm manager to join our growing team. Candidate must have conversational or better Spanish and English. Oversees and implements our day to day agricultural activities in Skagit County. Duties include helping start-up farmers, maintaining tractors and equipment, managing organic certification.

[Full Job Description & Application Instructions](#) (PDF)

USDA Expands Support for Small/Mid-Sized Farmers and Ranchers

USDA recently announced new and expanded efforts to connect small- and mid-sized farmers and ranchers with USDA resources that can help them build stronger businesses, expand to reach new and larger markets, and grow their operations.

New efforts include changes to the Farm Storage and Facility Loan Program to help small- and mid-sized fruit and vegetable producers access the program for cold storage and related equipment. In addition, USDA will soon announce an additional \$15 million for hoop houses in persistent-poverty counties in 19 states.

USDA is developing a whole farm insurance policy that will better meet the needs of highly diversified producers. USDA is also increasing support for farm to school and has broadened the National Farmers Market Directory to include CSAs, on-farm stores, and food hubs.

USDA launched Small Scale Solutions for Your Farm, a series of educational resources designed for both small livestock and fruit and vegetable producers. [Additional support efforts are listed online.](#)



New Report: Farm to Institution Strategies - Puget Sound Region



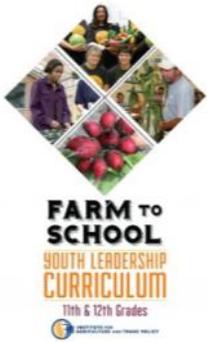
Farm to Institution Strategies: Impact investing in health and economic development through the value chain of healthy regional food in the Puget Sound region

To combat childhood obesity and improve health, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation convened a collaborative project in the Puget Sound region to increase consumption of healthy, WA grown food in King County schools, hospitals and childcare facilities.

This multi-phase Farm-to-Institution (F2I) project aims to strengthen the regional food economy and overcome challenges to providing regionally-produced food in institutions that serve low-income children through four components: develop market research to inform impact and program related investment strategies; highlight models and case studies that could be replicated via different forms of investment; leverage and scale successful aspects of current F2I initiatives; and evaluate and document successes and lessons learned.

The final report, *Farm-to-Institution Strategies: Impact investing in health and economic development through the value chain of healthy regional food in the Puget Sound region*, is now available for public download [here](#).

Farm to School Youth Leadership Curriculum



The semester-long Farm to School Youth Leadership curriculum is designed to empower high school students and engage them in meaningful, hands-on learning activities that also strengthen their school's Farm to School program and link them directly with farmers in their community.

The Farm to School Youth Leadership Curriculum is comprised of six lessons that can be taught consecutively over a semester or as single lessons or activities to complement other classes. Each lesson contains a lesson summary, facilitator preparation notes, activities, worksheets, recommended optional work and further resources for students and teachers. Lessons include themes such as "School Lunch: How Does it Really Work?" and "Communicating with Producers of Local Foods."

Download the entire curriculum for free by going to: www.iatp.org/f2s-

FUELS Act passes U.S House - on to U.S. Senate

The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed the Farmers Undertake Environmental Land Stewardship Act (FUELS). The FUELS Act modifies the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) farm fuel storage regulation.

The FUELS Act will ease the Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) program rules for small farmers and ranchers by modifying the exemption level to be more reflective of a producer's spill risk and financial resources. The exemption level for a single aboveground container would be adjusted upward to 10,000 gallons while the aggregate level on a production facility would move to 42,000 gallons. In addition it places a greater degree of responsibility on the farmer or rancher to self-certify compliance, instead of having to procure the services of certified Professional Engineers (PEs).



Follow the progress of this measure as it makes its way through the U.S. Senate. <http://beta.congress.gov/bill/113th-congress/house-bill/311>

City of Spokane proposes market garden program

The City of Spokane recently filed a proposed amendment to encourage the development of a residential market garden pilot program citywide. The proposal is to add a new chapter of the Spokane Municipal Code to encourage development of a market garden pilot program whereby residents may sell from residential lots agricultural products that are growing on site. This would apply within the City of Spokane city limits.

The ordinance, if adopted, would facilitate the establishment and operation of market gardens in residential zones with the state goal being to introduce market gardens to the public for the benefit of the operators of the gardens as well as residents. The program will enable small-scale businesses that grow products to sell those products where grown.

New Mobile Poultry Processing Unit Coming On Line in Spring 2014

Pastured poultry has long been recognized as a viable enterprise for diversified family farms. In order to access markets, farmers must have their birds processed. Whether direct marketing, retail, or wholesale, there are specific processing regulations that must be followed and stringent guidelines for the facilities used.

A new option, advocated by the Northwest Agriculture Business Center, is coming on line, just in time for spring harvest: a fully staffed, self-contained, WSDA-certified Mobile Poultry Processing Unit or "MPPU" is under construction, thanks to funding from the Whatcom Community Foundation's Sustainable Whatcom Fund. **Check out the full release from Northwest Agriculture Business Center [here](#).**

WASHINGTON STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

<p>USDA Farm to School Grants to Continue Efforts to Increase Local Foods in Eligible Schools</p> <p>USDA recently announced the release of a request for applications for the third round of USDA's Farm to School grants, including the addition of a new funding track. These grants help eligible schools improve the health and wellbeing of their students and connect with local agricultural producers.</p> <p>Learn more about applying, types of grants, upcoming webinars, and more by going to: FY 2015 Farm to School Grant Program Funds</p>	<p>Fund-a-Farmer Grant</p> <p>The Fund-a-Farmer Project awards grants for projects that help family farmers transition to pasture-based systems, improve the marketing of their humane products, or more generally enrich the conditions in which the farm animals are raised. Fund-a-Farmer will provide 15 grants of up to \$2,500 to qualifying livestock and poultry farmers.</p> <p>More information here.</p> <p>Applications must be postmarked by May 1, 2014.</p>	<p>Resource - Farmers Guide to the FSA Microloan Program</p> <p>Farmers' Legal Action Group (FLAG) is recently announced the release of a comprehensive publication, the Farmers' Guide to the Farm Service Agency Microloan Program, written to help farmers understand the new category of Operating Loans, called Microloans, now being offered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA).</p> <p>The guide is available for free download at www.flaginc.org.</p>
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Mark Your Calendars

<p>WSDA - Recall Ready Workshop - April 9-10, Issaquah</p> <p>April 9 (8am) - April 10, 2014 (1pm) Costco Headquarters - [map]</p> <p>United Fresh is offering its hands-on educational course, "Recall Ready Training Workshop" in Issaquah, WA and thanks to funding support from WSDA, you are invited to participate at a discounted rate of \$100.00. More details by here (PDF).</p>	<p>Beef 100, Lamb/Goat 100 or Poultry 100 classes set for April 4 - 5</p> <p>Friday, April 4 for Beef 100 , Lamb/Goat 100, or Poultry 100 at Castle Rock High School and/or all day Saturday, April 5 at the Kitsap County Fairgrounds for Pork 100 or a reprise of Poultry 100. A new addition to the short courses this year is Youth Livestock 100 on April 5 also at the Kitsap Fairgrounds. Registration details here (PDF)</p>	<p>Farm Recordkeeping for Productivity & Profitability - April 5</p> <p>Join WSU Saturday, April 5 from 9:00am to 3:00pm for a Farm Recordkeeping workshop. Location is WSU Snohomish County Extension's Cougar Auditorium, 600 128th St SE Everett, WA. Registration is \$40 per family.</p> <p>Registration details here.</p>
<p>Product Development for Value Added Prepared Foods</p> <p>Monday, April 7 - 9 am to 4 pm - WSU-NWREC, 16650 State Route 536, Mount Vernon. Click here for detailed directions.</p> <p>Geared to small scale producers of preserves, sauces, dressings and vinegars, snacks, baked goods and other value-added products. Click here for details.</p>	<p>WSU 2014 Beef Production Conference - Yakima - June 13-14</p> <p>WSU Extension and the WSU Animal Science Department recently announced a world-class conference serving the Beef Production Industry in Washington and the Pacific Northwest! This conference has something for beef producers of all types and sizes. Please visit the website for complete conference information.</p>	<p>Puget Sound Regional Food Policy Council Meeting - April 11</p> <p>The Regional Food Policy Council develops just and integrated policy and action recommendations that promote health, sustain and strengthen the local and regional food system, and engage and partner with agriculture, business, communities and governments in the four-county region. Meeting details here.</p>

"OUR MISSION IS TO PROMOTE THE VITALITY OF FARMING, FARMERS, AND RANCHERS BY ENSURING THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO HAVE PRODUCTIVE AGRICULTURAL LANDS IN WASHINGTON STATE. WE WILL ACHIEVE THIS THROUGH POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GOVERNOR, THE LEGISLATURE, THE OFFICE OF FARMLAND PRESERVATION AND OTHERS AND BY ENLISTING PUBLIC SUPPORT. PROGRAMS WILL BE VOLUNTARY, RECOGNIZE LOCAL PRIORITIES, AND PROVIDE FOR ECONOMIC INCENTIVES."